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ABSTRACT

The consultation, a followup to the June, 1973 Meeting of Experts on Documentation and Information Services in Adult Education, was prepared and organized by the UNESCO Adult Education Section and the International Bureau of Education for the purpose of discussing means of improving international information services in adult education. Detailed programs of action were developed for: (1) draft versions of the Thesaurus of Adult Education Terms; a comparative Dictionary of Adult Education Terms; a Directory of Documentation and Information Services in Adult Education; and lists of adult education national boards and councils, associations, periodicals, abstracting services and directories and (2) the Adult Education Data Bank consisting of Cooperative Educational Abstracting Service, International Educational Reporting Service, and other indicative abstracts. A list of participants is appended. (Author/EA)

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION

Consultation on the Development of International Information Services in Adult Education, with special reference to Thesaurus terms for Adult Education and to a Comparative Dictionary of Adult Education Terms

(Geneva, 22 - 26 March, 1976)

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. This consultation was prepared and organized by the Unesco Adult Education Section and the International Bureau of Education for the purpose of discussing means of improving international information services in adult education. A list of participants is included in Appendix I.

2. In terms of Unesco's programme in adult education, the meeting represented a follow-up to the Meeting of Experts on Documentation and Information Services in Adult Education (Geneva, 29 May - 1 June, 1973); at the same time it formed part of the continuing activities of the IBE designed to strengthen the flow of educational documentation and information between Member States.

3. The consultation was opened with short statements by the organizers on new developments in the field of information exchange, on the special communication needs of adult educators and on the components of the Unesco adult education information network. These components are at present (a) Adult Education Information Notes; (b) CEAS Adult Education Abstracts; (c) Directories; (d) Thesaurus, and (e) Dictionary.

4. The consultation, which was of a technical nature, was conducted with a view to reaching agreement on a detailed programme of action to develop further :

(a) Draft version of the following documents, which formed the working papers of the meeting :

(i) A Thesaurus of Adult Education Terms, prepared under contract by Dr. Colin Titmus.

(ii) A comparative Dictionary of Adult Education Terms, prepared under contract with International Congress of University Adult Education by Dr. Colin Titmus.

(iii) Directory of Documentation and Information Services in Adult Education (annotated, computerized), prepared by Adult Education Section and IBE.

(iv) Lists of Adult Education National Boards and Councils, Associations, Periodicals, Abstracting Services and Directories, compiled by Adult Education Section.

(b) Adult Education data Bank :

(i) Cooperative Educational Abstracting Service (CEAS) Adult Education Series.

(ii) International Educational Reporting Service (IERS) Adult Education Projects.

(iii) Other indicative abstracts.

The working schedule of the consultation is included in Appendix II.

5. The participants had also an occasion to discuss with Paolo Freire, of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, his ideas on today's educational problems and possible changes in his views after having stayed in Switzerland for several years especially as regards his concept of conscientization.

CONCLUSIONS :

THESAURUS

6. Dr. Colin Titmus, who had prepared the draft version presented his work and problems relating to its realisation.

7. After a long and intensive discussion on relationships between different international and national thesauri, on relationships between the Unesco/IBE Education thesaurus and special Adult Education thesaurus, on the needs of adult educators and indexers of adult education materials, and on the selection of valid adult education terms, it was concluded that :

8. It is desirable as a long-term project to develop a Thesaurus which will facilitate communication between adult educators at the international level. A Thesaurus is an essential tool for analysing documents thus making it possible to use machine treatment.

9. Development of a Thesaurus for adult education should be designed as part of the work on the Unesco-IBE Education Thesaurus. It should meet the needs of adult educators, containing descriptors for concepts specific to adult education, as well as more general terms given particular meaning in adult education.

10. In presentation, this specifically adult education list should be nested in the IBE Thesaurus so as to make use of the full range of descriptors and identifiers contained there. In doing this, the content of the present Thesaurus, especially scope notes, will need some modification.

11. The Thesaurus operation should take place in stages as follows:

12. Stage 1 - during 1976

(a) Members of the group will comment on the Titmus list, while consulting the IBE Thesaurus, and will send in suggestions as to additions, changes, deletions of terms by end June. They will also send in names of people to receive the next draft.

(b) At this point, comment might also be on broad areas of descriptors that are missing. Thus, the industry-occupations-workers - vocational training area has already been indentified as one needing special attention. The IBE will consult ILO on this point.

(c) Next, in the summer, Unesco-IBE will put the modified Titmus Thesaurus into the computer so as to produce a single list of terms useful for adult education indexing. For ease of reference this will be a mix of IBE terms and additional Adult Education terms. The print out will be xeroxed and sent to a representative group of adult educators for comment. The covering letter will be clear and simple, and two copies will go to each respondent, with the request for marking one up and returning it by the end of the year.

(d) Some 30-50 people will be consulted - either suggested by members of this group or derived from the Directory.

(e) Early 1977, with the revision of the IBE Thesaurus, the first version of an enriched, adult education Thesaurus will also be produced.

Phase 2 : In 1977

13. The justification for creating a Thesaurus is that it will be used in building up a data base. Hence the focus for action in 1977 will be to obtain the support of a reasonable number of adult education centres for the cooperative building up of an international data base on adult education.

14. Two critical points will occur in 1977 :

(a) a planning meeting, early in the year.

(b) the International Conference on Education in September 1977.

15. The planning meeting should be well prepared. This means that Unesco should invite participants well ahead of time, and should provide through a position paper enough proposals for the participants to test out in terms of available documentation and the needs of their own adult education communities.

16. The planning meeting should bring together a small group of potential partners i.e. adult education centres concerned with abstracting. The purpose will be to secure agreement :

(a) on selection criteria : what documents (defined in terms of their content and scope) should be taken into an international data base;

(b) on abstracting procedures : using the descriptors of the Thesaurus, to produce a short abstract in English or French for computer storage;

(c) on a trial programme for the rest of 1977 during which the partners would commit themselves to a certain production and Unesco to the necessary computer processing and dissemination.

17. The International Conference should be an occasion for giving visibility to the emerging adult education network and the idea of the data base - with a view to securing support for the next stages of the work.

COMPARATIVE DICTIONARY (GLOSSARY)

18. The work was presented by Dr. Colin Titmus, who had undertaken the compilation on behalf of the International Congress of University Adult Education.

19. The meeting had a lengthy discussion on the glossary, especially as regards terms and definitions with cultural orientation, and the format and users of the glossary.

20. The following conclusions were reached regarding the continuation of the work :

21. It will be important, alongside the thesaurus operation, to develop a dictionary or glossary of terms currently used in adult education. The purpose of this dictionary is to give, in international languages, the principal terms used specifically in adult education and more general terms given some particular meaning in adult education.

22. The aim of the work is to provide adult educators in all countries with a basic list of terms so as to facilitate communication. At the start English and French will be given, but the longer term intention is to add other international languages. The main purpose of the glossary will be to give for each term a general definition or description, along with more specific references to English and French usage in Europe and North America. Hence the user should arrive at understanding of the general international senses of words, along with evidence of particular national senses.

23. A secondary aim will be to suggest translations, so as to help those concerned with translation or interpretation of adult education meetings or documents.

24. The format of the glossary will be the one proposed by IBE: each language has a section, in which each term is given with a general and, where necessary, specific definitions. The second language will be shown by a term (=, ≠, ≈) along with explanatory text. A single index will link the two sections.

25. For negotiating purposes, some clustering or facetting device should be followed.

26. The project will comprise these phases :

(a) by end June : members of the group comment on the Titmus dictionary - add, change, drop terms - comment on definitions - suggest broad areas for treatment;

(b) an editional board of 4 members (including the coordinator) will be named by Unesco;

(c) work goes ahead in latter half of year in order to reach agreements. Correspondence with members of this group will also continue;

(d) the editorial board should meet in early 1977, along with observers for other international language usage.

DIRECTORIES

27. The meeting discussed the need for adult education directories as tools for access to information and for dissemination of information.

28. The following directories were reviewed :

- Directory of Documentation and Information Services in Adult Education, provisional edition.
- Documentation Centres providing abstracts on Adult Education Literature, a list of addresses, first edition.
- National Adult Education Boards and Councils, a list of addresses, second edition.
- Adult Education Associations, a list of addresses, second edition.
- Adult Education Periodicals, a list of addresses, fourth edition.
- List of Adult Education Directories, preliminary edition.

(a) Directory of Documentation and Information Services in Adult Education

29. The provisional, annotated and computerized edition of this directory came out in the beginning of 1976. It was distributed

to National Commissions, Documentation Centres listed, major Adult Education Associations and Periodicals, together with covering letters specially designed for each group, requesting comments, corrections and additional entries for inclusion in the revised version which is envisaged to be published towards the end of this year.

30. The following suggestions were made to clarify the coding instructions of the worksheet :

(i) Instead of using the word institution it would be better to use documentation service in order to clarify that only such adult education centres as have documentation services would be included.

(ii) Size of staff (30-31): This should be clarified so that figures will be given both for the total number of personnel of the centre and for the number of persons working specifically in the documentation service.

(iii) Present Head (20): Name and title should be given of the person responsible for the documentation, or the person to whom correspondence dealing with documentation requests should be addressed.

(iv) Services given (24) : Mention should be given of the language(s) in which the centre can answer the requests and of the language(s) in which the material can be scanned by the centre (e.g. for abstracting service). There should also be clear mention of what services are provided locally and what internationally.

31. The criteria for inclusion were defined as follows :

(i) For each country a national key centre with interest and ability to offer international services; in the case of federal countries major regional centres, and in the case of a country with no specialized adult education documentation service a general education documentation centre including adult education services in its work should be listed.

(ii) A few major centres which offer documentation and information services in various fields of adult education and which can respond to enquiries coming from abroad. In principle university and public libraries offering services to a local clientele should be excluded.

32. The revision of the provisional edition will be undertaken by the Unesco Adult Education Section by the end of July and the printing by the IBE towards the end of this year.

33. The revised version should embody also the list of documentation centres which provide abstracts on adult education literature. Eventually the directory should also include indexes of major adult education data bases and major producers of microfiches of adult education materials.

(b) National Adult Education Boards and Councils

34. This directory is meant to provide a listing of bodies which undertake functions of co-ordination, co-operation and harmonization at the national level.

35. It was agreed that in addition to listing recognized national co-ordinating agencies for each country, for federal countries it should comprise regional co-ordinating agencies.

(c) Adult Education Associations

36. This list should include annotated addresses of national, regional and international associations which have adult education as their major raison d'être, whether covering adult education in general or limited to one field.

37. The annotation for the Associations should indicate, preferably in the form of keywords, the status (e.g. governmental or voluntary), the fields covered, and the main functions.

38. It was agreed that it is convenient to keep the National Boards and Councils and Associations lists separate at this stage, but that they should be developed in parallel with a view to eventual merging.

(d) Adult Education Periodicals

39. This list should aim at including all adult education journals and bulletins, both national, regional and international, published in the world.

40. It was agreed that apart from being a useful document as such, this list should be conceived and developed in a wider perspective as part of a list of educational periodicals which is under preparation and whose computer file is held at the IBE.

41. The present annotation of publisher, editor, frequency and language should be extended to indicate coverage and scope of the contents and mention if abstracts are available of the articles and in what language(s).

42. In connection with the above-mentioned directories the meeting discussed the questionnaires prepared by Professor Alex Charters of Syracuse University, and it was agreed that the information which he will collect on adult education abstracting services, organizations and periodicals could be utilized both for the annotated versions of the Unesco lists and for his project of compiling an International Handbook of Resources for Educators of Adults.

(e) List of Adult Education Directories

43. This list gives bibliographical information of directories, yearbooks and similar publications on adult education organizations and activities, which have been compiled at national, regional and international levels. It also indicates addresses where the directories are available.

44. It was agreed to encourage countries that had not already done so to compile national directories.

ADULT EDUCATION ABSTRACTS

(a) Cooperative Educational Abstracting Service (CEAS) Adult Education Series

45. 31 abstracts, in two batches, have been produced in this series and distributed to about 6,000 CEAS and special adult education addresses.

46. The extensive discussion on the Series covered the following problems :

(i) Identification of documents and publications.
(ii) Preparation of long reading abstracts.
(iii) Production (printing).
(iv) Distribution.
(v) Usage.
(vi) Evaluations (feed-back).
(vii) Relation to other abstracting services.

47. At present the abstracts are produced in English and French. A Spanish translation of those of special interest to Latin America will be made by the Latin American Regional Office of the International Council for Adult Education in Costa Rica. A selection of the abstracts will appear also in Arabic in the bulletin of the Unesco Regional Office for the Arab States.

48. The meeting recognized the usefulness and great value of the long informative, reading substitute abstracts of significant adult education materials and that it is important to continue their production. The meeting also endorsed the criteria for selection established at the 1973 Geneva meeting.

49. It was agreed that the participants will assist in identifying titles worth abstracting. These titles should be sent to Unesco Adult Education Section which is responsible for the final selection. Unesco would also welcome completed abstracts from those documentation centres which prepare them in the course of their regular work. These abstracts should be sent to the IBE, together with two copies of the original document and a copy of the abstract to the Adult Education Section. Official documents are most welcome for abstracting.

50. Abstracts of importance only to special groups and areas could be reproduced by a xerox process and distributed in a more limited manner.

51. It was agreed that with each abstract there should be a clear mention of where the original document is available.

52. The IBE is preparing a special adult education supplement to the guidelines for preparing CEAS abstracts. The guidelines will be sent to the participants for comments.

53. This service aims at reaching its full operation during 1977, which means 80 - 100 abstracts in four batches a year. To achieve this, it was proposed that a group meeting should be organized early in 1977, which would be composed of partners who would be willing to make a commitment to co-operate fully in the service. Unesco should prepare a position paper for the meeting and invite the participants well in advance.

54. The position paper should cover the following :

(i) Selection criteria, reclarified after exploring the situation of available documentation in Member States and the needs of the international clientele
(ii) Understanding and preparation of the abstracts.
(iii) Planned programme of commitments for the partners.

55. This meeting should form part of the planning meeting mentioned in paragraph (14) under THESAURUS.

(b) International Educational Reporting Service (IERS) Adult Education Projects

56. Mr. Leo Fernig, Director of the IBE, presented the IBE Innovations project of the IERS, which is intended to inform educators and particularly those in the developing countries, of innovative projects to enable them to make their own decisions.

57. The IERS is computer based and its stages are :

(i) Gathering of documentation.
(ii) Providing information on the projects through :
- A Newsletter (distribution 9,000 copies).
- An awareness list, which is a computer print-out of a bibliography, with indicative abstracts (800 copies).
- Series of Innovation Studies (Experience and Innovation in Education).

(iii) Feedback and evaluation (a special evaluation study is under way).

58. It is desirable that there should be more co-operation and collaboration between the adult education community and the IERS, and that the participants could assist by informing IBE of innovative projects.

59. The criteria for inclusion in the IERS are :

(i) projects representing change,

(ii) projects bringing out innovation,

(iii) projects with interest on the international level.

(c) Overall Adult Education Data Bank

60. It was concluded that the average annual input of adult education material in the format of indicative abstracts prepared with descriptors should aim at reaching 1,000 entries so that the building up of a computer data base is fully justified.

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WORKING SCHEDULE

MONDAY 22 MARCH

Welcome

Session I

THESAURUS OF ADULT EDUCATION TERMS

- modification of the Unesco : IBE Education Thesaurus to make it more responsive to adult education needs;
- production of supplementary microthesaurus accomodating special adult education terms;
- selection of terms and arrangement of facets to meet the needs of deep indexing : dult education documents.

Session II

THESAURUS continued

TUESDAY 23 MARCH

Session III

DICTIONARY OF ADULT EDUCATION TERMS E/F - F/E

- selection of terms
- accuracy of definitions
- organization of terms
- equivalents : Spanish, Russian

Session IV

COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL ABSTRACTING SERVICE (CEAS)

Adult Education Series

- general presentation of the service
- identification of publications to be abstracted
- diffusion, feed back.

WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH

Session V

CEAS Adult Education Abstracts continued

Session VI

ADULT EDUCATION DIRECTORIES

- Documentation and Information services
- National Boards and Councils
- Associations
- Periodicals
- Documentation services providing abstracts
- List of Directories

- Criteria for inclusion
- annotations, worksheets
- indexes

QUESTIONNAIRES for collecting information on Adult Education Periodicals and Organizations relating to the project of International Handbook of Resources for Educators of Adults by Prof. A. Charters, Syracuse University.

- comments
- suitability of the information collected as annotations for Unesco directories.

THURSDAY 25 MARCH

Session VII

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL REPORTING SERVICE (IERS)

- general presentation of the service
- adult education contributions

Session VIII

Meeting with Paolo FREIRE from World Council of Churches

THESAURUS continued

FRIDAY 26 MARCH

Session IX

CONCLUSIONS of the Meeting

Closing of the Meeting

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

1. Draft Agenda

2. Tentative list of participants

3. UNESCO, The Thesaurus of Adult Education Terms, first draft version.

4. _____, A Comparative Dictionary of Adult Education Terms, first draft version.

5. _____/BIE, Directory of Documentation and Information Services in Adult Education, provisional edition.

6. _____, National Adult Education Boards and Councils, a list of addresses, second edition.

7. _____, Adult Education Associations, a list of addresses, second edition.

8. _____, Adult Education Periodicals, a list of addresses, fourth edition.

9. _____, Documentation Centres providing abstracts on Adult Education Literature, a list of addresses, first edition.

10. _____, List of Adult Education Directories, preliminary edition.

11. _____/IBE, CEAS Abstracts, Adult Education Series n° AE/2,1975

12. Dr. Titmus' letter of 11 September 1975 concerning Thesaurus Terms.

13. 2 questionnaires relating to collecting information on Adult Education Periodicals and Adult Education Organizations by Prof. A. Charters, Syracuse University.

14. UNESCO/IBE, Final Report of Meeting of Experts on Documentation and Information services for Adult Education (Geneva, 29 May- 1 June 1973).